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S E C R E T THE HAGUE 001057

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [IZ](#) [NL](#)

SUBJECT: DUTCH RESPONSE TO DEMARCHE ON PROTECTING THE UN IN IRAQ

REF: STATE 65106

Classified By: CLASSIFIED BY AMBASSADOR CLIFFORD M. SOBEL FOR REASONS 1
.4 (B AND D)

1. (S) Ambassador Sobel raised reftel request directly with PM Balkenende on April 11, and followed up with DefMin Kamp and the PM's Foreign Policy Advisor Rob Swartbol on April 13. PolMilOff also discussed this issue with MFA Security Policy Bureau Operations Office Director Rob Gabrielse on April 12 and 14. Although Balkenende's initial reaction had been noncommittal, Kamp reacted very negatively to the proposal, arguing that for the Dutch to go back into Iraq so soon after having left (the last members of the Dutch deployment to AlMuthanna province departed Iraq on April 2) would undermine the rationale for their departure. Kamp said this request represented an unfair burden on the Netherlands, and that the U.S. and the UN should be able to find another country to handle the task. Separately, PM Balkenende's Foreign Policy Advisor Swartbol advised that sending an armed Dutch presence back into Iraq at this time would not be appropriate. Swartbol said that PM Balkenende and Kamp had spoken on this issue following the Ambassador's discussion with Balkenende and were agreed on this point.

2. (S) Comment: We do not believe that the Dutch government will take on this mission. While DefMin Kamp was willing to defy the main opposition Labor Party over deployment of special operations forces to Afghanistan for OEF, he is sensitive to public perceptions and feels that to go back to Iraq, even for such a different mission, would signal weak leadership on his part. Given his success in resisting pressure for a further extension of the Dutch AlMuthanna deployment last January, we judge that his cabinet colleagues, even if they were inclined to support this mission, would not attempt to reverse his position. End comment.

3. (U) Baghdad minimize considered.
SOBEL